



REFLECTIONS

on a Mission



2010 Annual Report
North Carolina State Rehabilitation Council

*Our cover photos are of former NCDVRS consumers:
(l to r) Jaime Cisneros, a meat cutter at Martin Pork
in Falcon; Eddie Norcross, a floor technician at Kinston's
Lenoir Memorial Hospital; and Libby Braswell, a client
services/marketing specialist at Bekins Relocation Services
in Smithfield.*



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North Carolina State Rehabilitation Council

Message from the Chair

On behalf of the North Carolina State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and those we serve, I would like to thank you for your support of and interest in North Carolina's vocational rehabilitation services during 2010. It has been an active year for the council as we continue to fulfill our statutory responsibilities and roles as advocates for the rehabilitation needs of North Carolinians with disabilities.

During 2010, the council remained committed to the development and implementation of North Carolina's state plan and the triennial Comprehensive Needs Assessment. The consumer satisfaction survey was sent out monthly and a public forum was held in the western region of the state. You will find the council's participation in these areas detailed in this report.

The council was also active in statewide conferences aimed at conducting public outreach and the annual legislative breakfast to promote awareness of vocational rehabilitation services and the SRC.



Bobbie Grammer

The SRC's work continues to be guided by the four goals in our strategic plan:

- ▶ To advocate for adequate services and the community supports necessary for an individual to be successful in a program of services;
- ▶ To assist the DVRS with establishing goals and strategies to effectively address the needs identified by the triennial Comprehensive Needs Assessment;
- ▶ To inform all stakeholders of the role of the SRC and its advocacy efforts; and
- ▶ To enhance the SRC's knowledge of the needs of all of its stakeholders.

I am pleased to report on the work and accomplishments of the council and its committees this year. I would like to thank the council members for their dedication as advocates for all North Carolinians with disabilities.

Bobbie Grammer, Chair
North Carolina State Rehabilitation Council

The Mission of the Council

To enhance the employment, independent living and equality of individuals with disabilities in the state of North Carolina.

The Purpose of the Council

- ▶ To advise and work in partnership with the N.C. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (NCDVRS).
- ▶ To assist the division in accomplishing its charge to promote employment and independence for people with disabilities through customer partnerships and community leadership.
- ▶ To provide guidance, input and recommendations relative to the development and expansion of vocational rehabilitation services and programs in an effort to maximize employment opportunities and independence for individuals with disabilities
- ▶ To advocate for legislation that supports individuals with disabilities in making successful transitions into the workforce and the community.
- ▶ To provide customers and stakeholders of vocational rehabilitation services with a formal mechanism to influence policy and the direction of DVRS at the highest administrative level of the state.

The Year by the Numbers

- ▶ NCDVRS services helped 5,961 North Carolinians achieve successful employment outcomes.
- ▶ The N.C. Assistive Technology Program provided 10,015 individuals with equipment loans or demonstrations.
- ▶ Disability Determination Services closed 212,024 cases involving Social Security Disability, Supplemental Security Income and Medicaid Disability benefits.
- ▶ Supported employment services resulted in 923 individuals achieving their employment objectives.



Jaime Cisneros
Falcon

N.C. State Rehabilitation Council Objectives

1. To carry out the following, after consulting with the state's Workforce Development Board: review, analyze, and advise the Designated State Agency (DSA) regarding the performance of the Designated State Unit (DSU) under this Title, particularly with responsibilities related to eligibility (including order of selection); extent, scope, and effectiveness of the services provided; and functions performed by state agencies that affect the ability of individuals with disabilities in achieving outcomes under this Title.
2. To carry out the following in partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DSU): develop, agree to, and review state goals, and provide in accordance with Section 101(a)(15)(C); evaluate the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program; and submit reports of the progress to the Commissioner in accordance with Section 101(a) (15) (E).
3. To advise the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services (DSA) and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DSU) regarding activities authorized to be carried out under this Title and assist in the preparation of the State Plan and amendments to the Plan, applications, reports, needs assessments, and evaluations required by this Title.
4. To the extent possible, conduct reviews and analysis of the effectiveness of, and consumer satisfaction with, the functions of the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services: the vocational rehabilitation services provided by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and other public and private entities responsible for providing services to individuals with disabilities under the Act; and the employment outcomes achieved by eligible individuals receiving services under the Act, including the availability of health and other employment benefits in connection with such employment outcomes.
5. To prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor and the Commissioner of RSA on the status of the vocational rehabilitation programs operating within the state and to make this report available to the public.
6. To avoid duplication of efforts and to enhance the number of individuals served.
7. Coordinate with the activities of other councils within the state, including: the Statewide Independent Living Council; the advisory panel established under Section 612(a) (21) of the Individuals with Disabilities Act Amendments of 1997; the state Council on Developmental Disabilities; the state Mental Health Planning Council; the state Workforce Investment Board; and other public and private organizations, groups, and functions such as the Council of State Administrators for Vocational Rehabilitation, the National Rehabilitation Association, and the N.C. Rehabilitation Association.
8. To provide for coordination and to establish working relationships between the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services and the Statewide Independent Living Council and the centers for independent living in the state.
9. To perform other functions consistent with the purposes of this Title comparable to other functions performed by the Council.

NCSRC Standing Committees

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee acts on behalf of the council consistent with the council's purpose as outlined in its bylaws. The committee is responsible for compiling the council's response to the State Plan and triennial needs assessment, preparing the annual report, establishing meeting agendas, and setting the general direction of the council and its committees.

In order to further expand SRC participation in the development and implementation of the state plan, the council's Executive Committee addresses state plan development, implementation, and progress towards plan goals and SRC goals within the "Goals, Priorities and Strategies" section of the plan during monthly meetings with the NCDVRS director. The Executive Committee, along with the division's Planning and Evaluation Section, reports on the state plan to the full council at each quarterly meeting for their input and approval.

During their monthly meetings, the Executive Committee continues to work with the Planning and Evaluation Section on the development and implementation of the 2010 Triennial Comprehensive Needs Assessment. The committee and section staff report back to the full council on the needs assessment at each quarterly meeting for their input and approval. The Executive Committee also maintains responsibility for developing the agendas for the quarterly full council meetings.

In 2010, the chair attended the CSAVR Conference in Bethesda, Md. and reported on the support for SRCs' advocacy role and the barriers other states face relating to timely appointments to the council. Executive Committee members participated in statewide meetings to promote public outreach and to describe the role of the SRC in gathering data for the triennial needs assessment. These include the Assistive Technology Expo, NCRA's legislative breakfast and the SERNRA/NCRA 2010 Training Conference.

The Executive Committee continues to adhere to the committee structure to maintain a more effective leadership role. The option to extend the chair's term to two years to run concurrent with the membership term was implemented. During each committee meeting, SRC membership terms are carefully reviewed and the committee makes recommendations for recruiting new members and examines applications as necessary.

The Executive Committee published a commercially printed and an electronic annual report for distribution to the public and key partners. The report summarizes the work of the council and highlights key components of its mission, such as consumer satisfaction. This year, the committee focused on a distribution plan to include legislators, local VR unit offices, state and national VR programs, rehabilitation counseling graduate programs and those people represented through council

membership to ensure awareness of the work of the SRC and the role that the council plays in advising the designated state unit.

Consumer Input and Public Outreach Committee

The Consumer Input and Public Outreach Committee reviews, analyzes and makes recommendations to the council regarding the effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services delivered by NCDVRS and other public and private agencies in the state.

The committee also gathers information using the consumer satisfaction survey, public forums and feedback from the Client Assistance Program. The committee accomplished several consumer-input tasks and continued to explore new methods for gathering input and increasing public outreach to strengthen the quality of rehabilitation services.

To ensure the continuity and timeliness of consumer satisfaction data, the committee switched to monthly surveying of consumers. This increased the survey response rate to its highest level in four years. The committee continued to explore implementation methods, focusing on web survey and telephone interview methods. A web survey using the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services' SurveyMax tool and NCDVRS' new case management system will occur in the upcoming year. A proposal for telephone interviews was developed during 2010 and will be refined during 2011.

The committee discussed opportunities to connect more with stakeholder groups that can influence the goals of the council's strategic plan and proposed increasing collaboration with business partners. Plans are to attend stakeholder events in the upcoming year.

The committee focused on gathering input through public forums. A September 9 forum in Asheville allowed consumers, providers, employers, stakeholders and staff to express concerns and highlight how services have or have not met existing need. The committee intends to compile feedback gained through these forums to guide the council's work on the statewide needs assessment, development of agency policies, and recommendations for goals and strategies in the 2012 state plan.

Policy and Rules Review Committee

The Policy and Rules Review Committee reviews and makes recommendations relating to division policy and procedures that affect the public, are subject to public rule-making hearings under the state's Administrative Procedures Act or both. In the past year, the committee provided feedback on draft policies in areas that include:

- ▶ Self-employment services
- ▶ Hearing disabilities
- ▶ Personal assistance services
- ▶ ARRA-funded, time-limited on-the-job, work adjustment and internship
- ▶ Mental restoration services
- ▶ Financial need and client resources



Libby Braswell
Smithfield

Community Outreach, Advocacy, Member Development

This year the council's goal has been to have greater impact on its mandates in the areas of community outreach, advocacy and SRC member development.

Liaison Activities

The council continues its involvement with seven liaison groups that require SRC involvement, as well as special interest groups. There are council members who are designated to serve as council representatives. The council continues to focus on identifying potential members who can effectively liaison with some of the groups. Involvement is seen as a critical opportunity to partner with key stakeholders, as well as provide strategic paths for community outreach, advocacy, and SRC member development. The seven groups are:

- ▶ Council on Education Services for Exceptional Children
- ▶ Mental Health Planning Council
- ▶ N.C. Substance Abuse Federation
- ▶ N.C. Council on Developmental Disabilities
- ▶ N.C. Statewide Independent Living Council
- ▶ N.C. Commission on Workforce Development
- ▶ Commission for Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse

Public Forums

To provide opportunities for obtaining consumer input, the council conducted a public forum on September 9 in Asheville. A major concern brought forth was the difficulty experienced by people with mental illness in getting into the workplace setting without support and in effectively navigating the web of services. Another important theme was the lack of transportation in rural areas.

The following day, the full council met and discussed ways to address the topics that emerged. Also, regional division staff was invited to share issues, concerns and accomplishments. The forum continues to serve as a valuable way to obtain consumer input and increase awareness of the SRC's advocacy role in ensuring that the needs of the consumer and agency are met.

New SRC Member Training and Orientation

The council provided development opportunities through the annual Assistive Technology Expo, a tour of a university rehabilitation counseling program and participation in the SERNRA/NCRA Conference. Members were given an informative presentation by the N.C. Department of Transportation on efforts to expand mobility options for certain disability groups and on ADA challenges often presented by attempts to replicate transportation systems, especially in rural areas.

Review and Analysis of the Client Satisfaction Survey

The consumer satisfaction survey is mandated by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which states that the SRC shall conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of and client satisfaction with:

- ▶ the functions performed by the designated state agency;
- ▶ vocational rehabilitation services provided by state agencies and other public and private entities responsible for providing vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under the act; and
- ▶ employment outcomes achieved by eligible individuals receiving services under this title, including the availability of health and other employment benefits in connection with such employment outcomes.



Ronnie Isler
Kinston

Current Survey Process

The survey is conducted by the SRC in cooperation with division staff. The division contracts with a community rehabilitation program to prepare and mail the survey.

Last year, 10,542 survey forms were sent to former consumers of the division whose cases were closed either as successfully rehabilitated in employment or not successfully rehabilitated after services were provided.

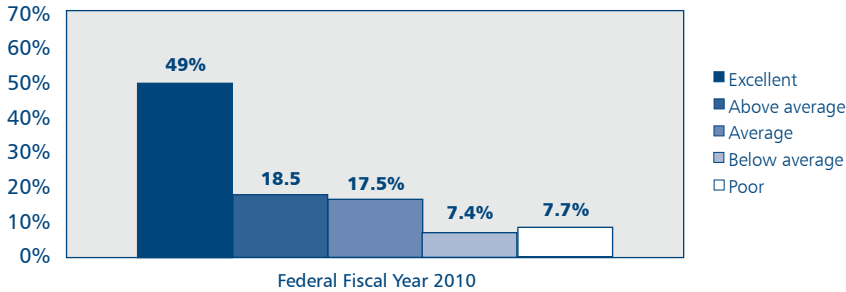
These consumers also received letters explaining why they were asked to respond and to let them know their responses would be kept confidential. A toll-free number was provided for any assistance needed. The survey was also made available in alternative formats. Of the survey forms sent out, 1,578 were completed and returned.

Overview of Satisfaction Survey

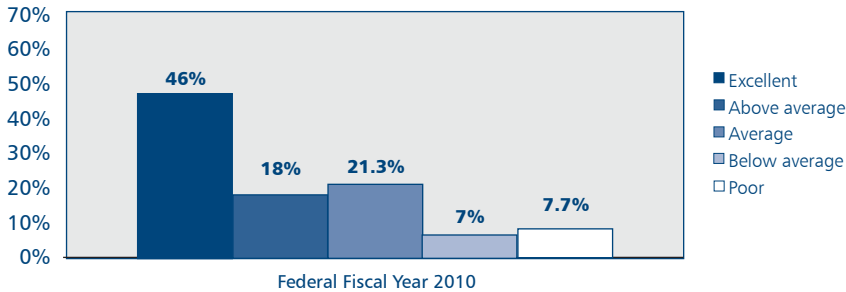
Printed in English, the survey's nine closed-end questions were designed to measure the consumer's experience with the state vocational rehabilitation program and to specifically determine if the consumer: had received information about the Client Assistance Program, had been informed of his or her right to appeal division decisions, and was satisfied with his or her rehabilitation counselor and involvement in the rehabilitation program. The survey also sought to determine what factors had prevented a consumer from obtaining employment and who had completed the survey — the actual consumer with or without help, a family member or a caregiver.

The charts on the following page reflect the 2010 survey's aggregate responses on three critical parameters of consumer satisfaction.

**Overall, how would you rate your experience
With the North Carolina
Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR) Program?**



**How would you rate the response time for services
provided by Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) staff?**



Were you satisfied with your counselor in terms of:



Recommendations Related to the 2011 N.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Plan

Through participation with the DVRS Program Planning and Evaluation unit and the director, the Executive Committee provided input on the progress of the 2010 state plan goals and development of the 2011 state plan.

The council recommended the following to the division in keeping with the identification of goals, priorities or strategies for FFY 2012:

Recommendation: As stated in the SRC's 2010-2013 strategic plan, the council recommends that the division employ a specialist to provide specific, research-based policy and casework guidance on physical disability issues and to liaise with community groups advocating for the needs of individuals with physical disabilities.

Division's Response: The division supports this recommendation and, during the coming year, will work toward developing a more detailed list of responsibilities for the position and identifying potential vacancies that can be used toward its re-establishment.

Recommendation: Based upon successful piloting using telephone-based survey methods during FFY 2010, the council recommends expanding use of this method and places high priority on developing the financial resources to significantly improve the response rate of the consumer satisfaction survey.

Division's Response: The division supports this recommendation and will continue progress toward that end during FFY 2011.

Recommendation: The council recommends that the division and council liaise with N.C. Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services to promote training for all local management entities related to extended vocational services.

Division's Response: The division agrees with this recommendation and will work to actively engage all relevant parties and develop appropriate venues.

Recommendation: The council recommends that the division incorporate on-line training on VR policies and services.

Division's Response: During FFY 2011, the division will develop a proposal for this, with a plan to implement at least the initial phase during this cycle.

Recommendation: The council recommends that the division explore strategies to reduce counselor and vocational evaluator vacancies through multiple means, including a salary study of other VR agencies to share with state personnel authorities.

Division's Response: The division welcomes the opportunity to develop strategies, primarily through the division's recruitment and retention committee. During FFY 2011, the division will seek reputable salary studies and identify successful methods used by other state programs to address this area of vital importance.

The Members of the North Carolina State Rehabilitation Council: 2009-10

Bobbie Grammer Chair	Representing State Education Agency (IDEA)
Davan Cloninger Chair Elect	Representing Disability Advocacy Groups
Kacie Blalock Immediate Past Chair	Representing Non-Division Rehabilitation Counselors
Michael Maybee	Representing Community Rehabilitation Service Providers
Celeste Hunt	Representing Directors of Projects Under Section 121
Karen Moye-Stallings	Representing NCDVRS Consumers
Kathy Brack	Representing Client Assistance Program (CAP)
Horace Hunt	Representing Business and Industry Sector
Richard Crews	Representing Business and Industry Sector
Mark Ezzell	Representing Disability Advocacy Groups
Jason Reynolds	Representing Disability Advocacy Groups
Dennis Troy	Representing Statewide Independent Living Council
Carol Walker	Representing Regional Rehabilitation Centers for the Physically Disabled
Darryl Jackson	Representing Labor
Doreen Byrd	Representing Parent Training and Information Centers
Brenda Savage	Representing N.C Commission on Workforce Development
Ping Holt	Representing N.C. Chamber of Commerce
Vacant	Representing Disability Advocacy Groups

Non-Voting Members

Linda Harrington, Director	N.C. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Jacqueline Tetterton	Counselor Advisory Committee, NCDVRS

2010 Meeting Schedule

- | | |
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| ▶ March 4-5 | Greensboro |
| ▶ June 10-11 | Raleigh |
| ▶ September 9-10 | Asheville |
| ▶ December 2-3 | Raleigh |

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N.C. State Rehabilitation Council

c/o N.C. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

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Department of Health and Human Services | Lanier M. Cansler, Secretary
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